

Federal Agency Name: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Water, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds

Funding Opportunity Title: FY 2007 National Wetland Program Development Grants

Announcement Type: Request for Proposals

Catalog of Domestic Assistance Number: 66.462

Funding Opportunity Number: EPA-OW-OWOW-07-03

Dates: Hard copy proposals must be received by EPA (See Section VII of this RFP) by **4:30 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) Friday August 10, 2007**, or by electronic submission through Grants.gov by **11:59 P.M. EDT Friday August 10, 2007**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII before **Monday August 6, 2007**. Written responses will be posted on EPA's web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>

Following EPA's evaluation of proposals, all applicants will be notified regarding their status. Final applications will be requested from those eligible entities whose proposal have been successfully evaluated and preliminarily recommended for award. Those entities will be provided with instructions and a due date for submittal of the final application package.

SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants for projects that support and build state/tribal/local government wetland programs. While Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) can be used by applicants to support and/or build any aspect of a comprehensive wetlands program, applicants that address one or more of the four National Priority Areas described in Section I.C will increase their chances of being selected for award (see Section V). The four National Priority Areas of the WPDG program are: 1) Regulation; 2) Monitoring and Assessment; 3) Restoration; and 4) Water Quality Standards.

Awards made under this announcement will support the Agency's Strategic Plan, Goal 4: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Sub-Objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

Non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis are eligible to apply under this announcement. Non-profit organizations described in Section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code that engage in lobbying activities as defined in Section 3 of the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 are not eligible to apply. Interstate agencies and intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR 35.504. The term "interstate agency" is defined in Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 502 as "an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator." All projects submitted for this competition must be broad in scope and encompass more than one state, tribe, or local government. **States, tribes, and local government agencies are not eligible to apply under this announcement. Implementation projects are not eligible under this announcement.**

The total amount of funding available under this announcement is approximately \$500,000, depending on Agency funding levels and other applicable considerations. It is anticipated that approximately four to twelve awards will be made under this announcement. It is anticipated that awards will range from \$25,000 to \$120,000 depending upon the amount requested and the overall size and need for the project.

I. FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION

A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The goals of EPA's Wetlands Program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, EPA seeks to build the capacity of all levels of government to develop and implement effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management. This announcement seeks proposals from eligible applicants that will help to support and build state/tribal/local government wetland programs. While WPDGs can be used by applicants to support and/or build any aspect of a comprehensive wetlands program, applicants that address one or more of the following four National Priority Areas will increase their chances of being selected for award (see Section V): 1) Regulation; 2) Monitoring and Assessment; 3) Restoration; and 4) Water Quality Standards.

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA. Section 104(b)(3) of the CWA restricts the use of these assistance agreements to improving wetland programs by the following: conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects (including health and welfare effects), extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, and project results must be disseminated to a broader audience so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project.

A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not considered a demonstration project. Implementation projects are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Funds received through the WPDG competition cannot be used to fund activities to implement a wetlands program or to fund the purchase of land or conservation easements. Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding.

B. ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS AND LINKAGE TO STRATEGIC PLAN

The WPDG program supports EPA's 2006-2011 Strategic Plan. Awards made under this announcement will support Goal 4: Healthy Communities, Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems, Sub-Objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands of the EPA Strategic Plan (available at <http://www.epa.gov/ocfo/plan/plan.htm>).

Goal 4: Healthy Communities and Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain or restore the health of people, communities, and ecosystems using integrated and comprehensive approaches and partnerships

- ❖ Objective 4.3: Restore and Protect Ecosystems -- Protect, sustain, and restore the health of critical natural habitats and ecosystems

- Sub-objective 4.3.1: Increase Wetlands: By 2011, working with partners, achieve a net increase in wetlands acres with additional focus on assessment of wetland condition.

All proposed projects must demonstrate a linkage to the Strategic Plan and include specific statements describing the environmental results of the proposed project in terms of well-defined outputs, and, to the maximum extent practicable, well-defined outcomes that demonstrate how the project will contribute to the overall goal of restoring and protecting ecosystems.

Environmental outputs (or deliverables) refer to an environmental activity, effort, and/or associated work product related to an environmental goal or objective, that will be produced or provided over a period of time or by a specified date. Outputs may be quantitative or qualitative but must be measurable during an assistance agreement funding period.

Examples of anticipated outputs from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Development of criteria for assessing the condition of “at-risk” wetlands;
- Development of training materials and tools to help local decision makers integrate wetland protection into watershed planning;
- Development of methods or criteria to assess the success of a mitigation site;
- Development of pilot restoration sites to demonstrate the effectiveness of a new restoration technique; and
- Development and verification of assessment methods and/or tracking (reporting) systems.

Environmental outcomes are the result, effect, or consequence that will occur from carrying out an environmental program or activity that is related to an environmental or programmatic goal or objective, and are used as a way to gauge a project’s performance and take the form of output measures and outcome measures. Outcomes may be environmental, behavioral, health-related or programmatic in nature. For instance, there is great need to improve the knowledge and decision-making ability, with respect to environmental issues, of local and state officials who are in the position of creating laws, ordinances, permits, etc. In this context, certain efforts designed to improve decision-making and behavioral changes can be viewed as environmental outcomes (results) if the grantee can show or measure the improvement in the knowledge of decision-makers who are in the position to create environmental institutional changes that are necessary to restore or protect the environment. In such instances, outcomes are not measured typically by environmental or water quality indicators, but rather by the institutional indicators that lead to the adoption and application of laws and regulations and the active management of programs necessary to provide environmental protection.

Outcomes must be quantitative and may not necessarily be achieved within an assistance agreement funding period. Outcomes may be short term (changes in learning, knowledge, attitude, skills), intermediate (changes in behavior, practice, or decisions), or long-term (changes in condition of the natural resource).

Examples of anticipated outcomes from the assistance agreements to be awarded under this announcement include, but are not limited to:

- Increased understanding of a wetland’s condition;
- Improved wetland protection efforts;
- Application of informed, scientifically valid approaches to watershed planning that will protect, prevent, and reduce pollution to wetlands and other aquatic resources;

- Increased understanding of how to ensure “no net loss” in quality and quantity of wetlands in the 404 regulatory program; and
- Increased quantity of wetlands.

As part of the workplan, applicants should describe how the project will result in the protection of wetland resources, and link the anticipated outputs and outcomes to the Agency’s Strategic Plan. Further information is located in Section IV.C of this RFP.

C. NATIONAL PRIORITY AREAS

The EPA Wetlands Program has identified six core elements critical to effective, comprehensive wetland programs. Explanation of these core areas can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/initiative/fy02elements.html>.

This announcement is soliciting proposals from eligible applicants to help support state/tribes/local governments in developing the core elements by addressing one or more of the following four National Priority Areas: 1) Regulation; 2) Monitoring and Assessment; 3) Restoration; and 4) Water Quality Standards. While WPDGs can be used by applicants to support and/or build any aspect of a comprehensive wetlands program, applicants that address one or more of the following four National Priority Areas will increase their chances of being selected for award (see Section V).

1. REGULATION (ENHANCING WETLANDS PROTECTION)

State/tribe/local government regulatory programs are generally organized around one or more of the following four approaches: the use of CWA Section 401 Certification process, the development of statewide programmatic general permits, the assumption of CWA Section 404 program by states/tribes, and the promulgation of wetland/aquatic resource protection ordinances or laws. Eligible applicants can help develop or strengthen any aspect of any one or more of the four approaches a state/tribe/local government may have chosen or may be considering to protect wetlands.

EPA recognizes that the development of a regulatory program can begin with either non-regulatory or regulatory activities. However, any non-regulatory activity under this priority should be connected to building or strengthening wetland protection/regulation.

Additional information is provided below on two aspects of wetlands protection/regulation – improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation and refining the protection of vulnerable wetlands and aquatic resources. EPA is providing more detail on the types of projects of interest in these two areas.

a.) Improving the Effectiveness of Compensatory Mitigation

Projects that improve state/tribe/local government capacity to ensure ecologically effective compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources under the federal CWA Section 404/401 program or state/tribal/local government regulatory programs either by entities that have assumed the CWA 404 program, have a similar permit system, or are permitted by the federal agencies, are encouraged. For example, WPDG funds can be used to help or inform development of mitigation performance standards. They also can be used to develop and verify assessment methods and/or tracking (reporting) systems that document the following:

1. Technical adequacy of compensatory mitigation project plans (e.g., plan review standards);
2. Ecological suitability of proposed compensatory mitigation project sites, taking into account a watershed context;

3. Compliance of mitigation projects at various stages of implementation including long-term mitigation site management (perpetual stewardship); and
4. Adequacy of compensatory mitigation for managing cumulative wetland impacts under the federal CWA Section 404/401 program.

On March 27, 2006, EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (the Corps) announced proposed revisions to regulations governing compensatory mitigation for authorized impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the CWA. These revisions are designed to improve the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation at replacing lost aquatic resource functions and area, expand public participation in compensatory mitigation decision-making, and increase the efficiency and predictability of the process of proposing compensatory mitigation projects. These primary themes of the proposed rulemaking convey the major areas of interest regarding mitigation that are being supported by the federal agencies. A copy of the proposed rule and related documents can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/wetlandsmitigation/>.

Background information describing concepts and methods for improving the effectiveness of compensatory mitigation can be found in a National Academy of Science publication entitled “Compensating for Wetland Losses under the Clean Water Act.” The document can be found at <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309074320/html/>.

WPDG funds can only be used for research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies to support, improve, or develop mitigation programs; specifically, funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding.

b.) Refining the Protection of Vulnerable Wetlands and Aquatic Resources

While all wetlands provide important ecological functions on a watershed and landscape scale, some are more vulnerable to impacts or loss than others. For example, geographically isolated wetlands and other waters may be particularly at risk due to recent changes in the legal landscape surrounding the CWA. These waters may be at risk for impacts from activities resulting in a discharge of dredged or fill material, as well as indirect impacts. Information regarding this issue, including studies addressing geographically isolated wetlands can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/guidance/SWANCC/index.html#studies>

Efforts can include, but are not limited to, information dissemination, data exchange, studying state/tribal/local government regulatory improvement opportunities, and surveying opportunities for land acquisition, conservation easements, and tax incentive provisions. Research, investigation, and studies which support the inclusion of vulnerable wetlands in comprehensive wetland and watershed restoration and protection programs, and/or support refinement of information regarding the function of these valuable resources are also encouraged.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Regulation National Priority Area are:

- Projects to inventory and evaluate current practices utilized by federal, state, and tribal aquatic resource regulatory programs to effectively avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources.
- Projects to provide technical assistance and training to specific stakeholders on the 404 permitting process, including threshold data requirements for providing adequate Sequencing and Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternatives information in watershed plan/master plans as well as the permitting process. Examples of key target audiences are planners and local governments.

- Projects to evaluate the ecological performance of wetland/stream compensatory mitigation banks.
- Projects for research/studies to support the development of effective ecological performance standards for compensatory mitigation sites.
- Projects to improve the long-term stewardship of compensatory mitigation sites including training local land conservation organizations on the stewardship responsibilities of compensatory mitigation sites, and training states, tribes, local governments and local conservation organizations on the best methods for developing long-term management plans and estimating the long-term management costs for compensatory mitigation sites.
- Projects to inventory and evaluate the types and functions of wetlands within a state/tribe/local government that are geographically isolated and therefore may no longer be fully covered by the CWA.
- Projects to evaluate how states/tribes/local governments with vulnerable wetland types are currently addressing or planning to address potential gaps in federal protection.
- Projects to develop or take an inventory of targeted outreach programs aimed at major stakeholders regarding the benefits of protecting vulnerable wetland types.
- Projects to incorporate wetland issues into broader watershed planning and watershed management goals and to reflect on the contribution by wetlands to the broader aquatic ecosystem.
- Projects to survey of vulnerable wetland types in order to identify potential opportunities to protect them through land acquisition, conservation easements, or tax incentive provisions.

2. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

EPA encourages the submission of proposals by eligible applicants that support the development and exchange of information necessary for state/tribes/local governments to develop strategies to strengthen adoption of wetland monitoring and assessment programs (*i.e.*, projects that build state/tribal/local government capacity to determine the causes, effects, and extent of pollution to wetland resources). Further description of the building blocks for a state/tribal/local government wetland monitoring and assessment program can be found in “Elements of a State/Tribe Wetland Monitoring and Assessment Program” at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/monitor/. This document recommends ten basic elements of a wetlands monitoring program, and serves as a tool to help determine whether a wetlands monitoring program meets the requirements of CWA 106(e)(1).

Additional information is provided below on two aspects of wetland monitoring and assessment – probabilistic wetland monitoring surveys and wetland mapping. EPA is providing more detail on the types of projects of interest in these two areas.

a.) Probabilistic Wetland Monitoring Surveys

EPA encourages the submission of proposals that will develop and demonstrate the use of probabilistic wetland monitoring surveys to evaluate and report trends in wetland area and condition for specific watersheds and other local planning areas. Surveys can be conducted to help document the significance of especially vulnerable aquatic resources, including headwater streams and geographically isolated wetlands. Surveys also can be conducted to evaluate the cumulative effectiveness of wetland restoration projects and programs. These smaller scale demonstrations should be conducted in such a manner that the data can be used for larger scale assessments such as in a rotating basin design. Proposals should explain how resultant data from the demonstration project will contribute to a broader understanding of wetland resources across a state, tribal nation, region, or across the country.

Examples of case studies illustrating wetland monitoring and assessment methods can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/bawwg/case.html>. Many of the case studies listed on this website were funded by WPDGs. A number of common program development steps can be seen in those case studies. Many successful programs begin with the development of a reference wetland network in a selected watershed or region. Sampling information then is used to develop and test wetland monitoring methods. Those methods, in turn, are used to implement assessment projects that generate the information needed to manage and report aquatic resource condition in the selected watershed. Additional information related to wetland monitoring and assessment can be found at www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/monitor.pdf and www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/facts/devgrants.pdf.

Proposals also may include tasks that describe how an existing or developmental wetland assessment method used in the project will be refined. Examples of how states have developed and tested methods can be found at: www.epa.state.oh.us/dsw/wetlands/WetlandEcologySection-Reports.html and www.cramwetlands.org.

To support a proposed project, applicants may also request funds to host technical training workshops, establish regional or state interagency wetland monitoring and assessment workgroups, develop volunteer monitoring programs, and improve wetland inventories (*e.g.*, use of hydrogeomorphic (HGM) wetland classification system).

b.) Wetland Mapping

EPA is emphasizing the need to fill gaps in wetland mapping and data collection to facilitate the development of wetland assessment programs and the other core elements of a comprehensive wetland program. Historically, wetland assessment efforts have been impeded by the lack of up-to-date wetland inventory maps and the lack of a common set of indicators and metrics to ensure reporting consistency among the states/tribes/local governments. Accurate and up-to-date wetland spatial information is necessary to quantitatively measure gains in wetlands; develop monitoring and assessment programs; develop efficient and effective regulatory/mitigation/enforcement programs; assist in the siting of wetland mitigation using a watershed approach; and develop state, tribal, county and watershed-wide restoration plans. Accurate spatial data will also help to incorporate wetlands into state, tribal, and local level watershed planning efforts.

Many states and tribes have identified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory (NWI) as the best existing base map for monitoring wetland gains and losses. EPA supports projects that enable mapping of wetland areas at a more refined scale than the NWI such as: at 1:12,000 resolution; assign attributes for types of wetlands to locational data; and develop tools that facilitate the above efforts. A "National Wetland Mapping Standard" is being developed by a workgroup of the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC). This will provide a national standard for wetland mapping, and wetlands mapped using the standard can be uploaded to the NWI data base to refine the existing NWI data. Eligible applicants can take advantage of the development of this data standard by forming "Wetland Mapping Coalitions" to help co-fund **regional** (two or more states) mapping efforts that would otherwise be too costly for any one group to undertake. Successful mapping coalitions have had upwards of 50 members made up of all interested parties such as local, state, federal, non-governmental organizations and many others such as local utilities. By forming these coalitions soon, Wetland Mapping Coalitions could be in position to use the mapping standard when it is **finalized** in Fall 2007. These coalitions are most effectively structured to address both mapping and monitoring issues concurrently and thus should be developed in close collaboration with any existing or planned

interagency monitoring workgroup. More information about the FGDC wetland mapping standard can be found at <http://www.fws.gov/nwi/fgdcwet.html>.

Inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands is considered implementation and is not eligible for funding under this competition. Projects will be eligible for funding when mapping activities are carried out as part of helping or informing development of a wetland program, for planning purposes, or as part of a demonstration project.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Monitoring and Assessment National Priority Area are:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands assessment data can be used to inform watershed planning decisions, including the use of assessment data to prioritize wetlands restoration.
- Projects that test the efficiency of wetlands indicators across a variety of wetlands and to identify appropriate indicators that will meet the data needs of both national and local scale assessments.
- Projects that would help to support the development of wetland assessment methodologies, including studies that assess current and innovative state wetland assessment practices for use on a national, regional, or ecosystem level.
- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands assessment methods and indicators can be used to develop mitigation performance standards that in turn can be incorporated into state water quality standards.
- Projects to create or disseminate information about new technologies that can provide states, tribes, and local governments the capability to inventory and monitor wetlands with the least expense and staff time.
- Projects to provide a detailed list of places where wetlands assessment data has been used as part of holistic watershed planning efforts, and explain what was done in each of those cases.
- Projects to develop on-line training and field tools for identifying hydrologic connections (such as aerial photography analysis, mapping.)
- Projects to provide technical assistance and training to stakeholders on the importance of including wetland condition assessments in the watershed planning and master planning processes. Examples include developing approaches for local governments to identify stakeholders that have wetland monitoring data and/or data needs to assess the impacts of wetland permits on the water quality within their watershed.

3. WETLAND RESTORATION

A core element of a state/tribal/local government wetlands program is to encourage and directly support wetland restoration and enhancement. Mitigation required under a regulatory program does not by itself fulfill this function created by prior wetland loss or decreases in wetland condition. A state/tribal/local government wetland restoration/enhancement program can serve a variety of functions including: providing direct funding of wetland restoration projects located in that state or tribe; building an active wetland restoration program on state or tribal owned lands; development of public outreach on the benefits of and opportunities for restoration on private land; provisions for technical assistance or incentives for landowners or organizations to carry out wetland restoration projects; research regarding effective wetland restoration techniques; methods to measure the success of restoration activities; and training and capacity building for organizations interested in joining restoration partnerships.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the Restoration National Priority Area are:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands data can be incorporated into watershed planning for wetlands protection, restoration, and improvement activities.
- Projects to develop and provide targeted outreach to specific key stakeholders on issues related to wetlands protection and restoration.
- Projects to develop and provide training for key stakeholder groups on the benefits of wetland restoration, protection, and improvement activities to help overcome barriers in carrying out these types of activities.

4. WATER QUALITY STANDARDS FOR WETLANDS

Water quality standards are necessary to ensure that, under provisions of the CWA, wetlands are afforded the same level of protection as other waters. Water quality standards provide a programmatic basis for a variety of water quality management activities including, but not limited to, monitoring and assessment under CWA §305(b) and/or CWA §303(d), permitting under CWA §402 and CWA §404, water quality certification under CWA §401, and management of nonpoint source pollution under CWA §319. When wetlands are incorporated into existing water quality standards, narrative and numeric criteria should be refined, when appropriate, to reflect conditions specific to wetlands.

Wetlands water quality standards should contain the following components:

- a. Established and assigned designated uses (e.g., wetland-specific aquatic life use support);
- b. Use of biological assessment methods and biological criteria (narrative and numeric) for wetlands water quality assessment; and
- c. An anti-degradation policy.

Examples of projects which could help build state/tribal/local government wetland programs under the *Water Quality Standards for Wetlands* National Priority Area are:

- Projects to demonstrate how wetlands assessment methods and indicators can be used to develop mitigation performance standards that in turn can be incorporated into state/tribal water quality standards.
- Projects to describe the state of the science for establishing a water quality standard for wetlands.
- Projects to calculate the value of wetland functions in a watershed that support watershed goals. This may include the economic benefits of protecting naturally occurring wetlands, as well as restoring degraded wetlands, when meeting water quality standards for other surface water bodies (i.e., targeting wetland protection to meet state CWA §319 watershed goals, targeting wetland restoration as a component of green infrastructure to meet stormwater ordinances).
- Projects to estimate the synergistic effects of constructed wetlands used in conjunction with the preservation and restoration of naturally occurring wetlands in meeting non-point source reduction goals in a watershed.

II. AWARD INFORMATION

EPA anticipates approximately \$500,000 will be available under this announcement to fund approximately four to twelve awards. EPA anticipates that typical awards for the selected projects will range from \$25,000 to \$120,000 depending on the amount requested, the project topic area, and the overall size and need for the project.

It is anticipated that awards under this announcement will have three year project periods. EPA reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated.

It is anticipated that grants and cooperative agreements may be funded under this announcement. When cooperative agreements are awarded, EPA will have substantial involvement with the project workplans and budget. Although EPA will negotiate precise terms and conditions relating to substantial involvement as part of the award process, the anticipated substantial Federal involvement for projects selected may include: close monitoring of the recipient's performance; collaboration during the performance of the scope of work; in accordance with 40 CFR 31.36(g), review of proposed procurements; approving qualifications of key personnel (EPA does not have authority to select employees or contractors employed by the recipient); review and comment on content of publications (printed or electronic) prepared under the cooperative agreement (the final decision on the content of reports rests with the recipient).

EPA reserves the right to make no awards under this announcement, or make fewer awards than anticipated. In addition, EPA reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Agency policy, if additional funding becomes available. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than six months after the original selection decisions.

In appropriate circumstances, EPA reserves the right to partially fund proposals by funding discrete portions or phases of proposed projects. If EPA decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

Funding may be used to acquire services or fund partnerships, provided the recipient follows procurement and subaward or subgrant procedures contained in 40 CFR Parts 30. Successful applicants must compete contracts for services and products and conduct cost and price analyses to the extent required by these regulations. The regulations also contain limitations on consultant compensation. Applicants are not required to identify contractors or consultants in their applications. Moreover, the fact that a successful applicant has named a specific contractor or consultant in the application does not relieve it of its obligations to comply with competitive procurement requirements.

Subgrants or subawards may be used to fund partnerships with nonprofit organizations and nonfederal governmental entities. Successful applicants cannot use subgrants or subawards to avoid requirements in EPA grant regulations for competitive procurement by using these instruments to acquire commercial services or products to carry out its grant. The nature of the transaction between the recipient and the subgrantee must be consistent with the standards for distinguishing between vendor transactions and subrecipient assistance under Subpart B Section 210 of OMB Circular A-133, and the definitions of "subaward" at 40 CFR 30.2(ff) or "subgrant" at 40 CFR 31.3, as applicable. EPA will not be a party to these transactions.

III. ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia which are capable of undertaking activities that advance wetland programs on a national basis are

eligible. The term “interstate agency” is defined in CWA Section 502 as “an agency of two or more states established by or pursuant to an agreement or compact approved by the Congress, or any other agency of two or more states, having substantial powers or duties pertaining to the control of pollution as determined and approved by the Administrator.” Intertribal consortia must meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504.

Non-profit applicants may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the definition of a non-profit organization in OMB Circular A-122. Interstate organizations may be asked to provide a citation to the statutory authority, which establishes their status. Intertribal consortia may be asked to provide documentation that they meet the requirements of 40 CFR Part 35.504.

B. COST SHARING/MATCH REQUIREMENTS

All applicants must contribute a minimum of 25 percent of the total project costs (*total federal share and match*) in accordance with 40 CFR 35.385, and 35.615. The match may be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions. In-kind contributions often include salaries or other verifiable costs and this value must be carefully documented. In the case of salaries, applicants may use either minimum wage or fair market value. Match must be for allowable project costs. Matching funds are considered grant funds and are included in the total award amount and should be used for the reasonable and necessary expenses of carrying out the workplan. All grant funds are subject to federal audit. Any restrictions on the use of grant funds (examples of funding restrictions are outlined in Section I.A and VI.E of this announcement) also apply to the use of matching funds. Other federal grants may not be used as matches or cost shares without specific statutory authority. The minimum match is determined by dividing the total project cost by four. EPA will use the following formula:

$$\frac{\text{Total Project Cost (\$)}}{4} = \text{minimum match (\$)}$$

For example, if the **total project cost** is \$100,000 the applicant must be able to provide \$25,000 in cash or in-kind contributions.

If an intertribal consortium includes its WPDG in an approved Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), the match requirement may be reduced to 5 percent of the allowable cost of the work plan budget for the first two years in which the intertribal consortium receives a PPG; after two years, the match may be increased up to 10 percent of the work plan budget (as determined by the Regional Administrator). Currently the Agency is finalizing a process to determine the percent match for tribal and intertribal consortium after the two year initial grant period. (See regulations at 40 CFR Part 35.536(c)).

Where the stated purpose is to include a WPDG into a PPG, an intertribal consortia may prepare a budget and proposed work plan based upon the assumption that EPA will approve the waiver amount for PPGs under 40 CFR 35.536. If a proposed PPG work plan differs significantly from the WPDG work plan approved for funding, the Regional Administrator must consult the National Program Office. (See 40 CFR 35.535). The purpose of this consultation requirement is to address the issue of ensuring that a project which is awarded WPDG funding is implemented once commingled with other grant programs in a PPG.

If the intertribal consortium does not or cannot include the WPDG as part of an approved PPG, or chooses to withdraw the WPDG from their PPG, the intertribal consortium must then meet the match requirements identified above and, as applicable, negotiate a revised workplan with the EPA contact identified in Section VII.

C. THRESHOLD ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

These are requirements that, if not met by the time of proposal submission, will result in elimination of the proposal from consideration for funding. Only proposals that meet all of these criteria will be evaluated against the ranking factors in Section V of the announcement.

Applicants deemed ineligible for funding consideration as a result of the threshold eligibility review will be notified within 15 calendar days of the ineligibility determination.

1. Except as stated below, proposals must **substantially** comply with the proposal submission instructions and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement or else they will be rejected. In addition, where a page limit is expressed in Section IV with respect to the proposal, pages in excess of the page limitation will not be reviewed.
2. An applicant must meet the eligibility requirements in Section III.A and the match requirements in Section III.B of this announcement at the time of proposal submission.
3. Proposals must be for projects that improve wetland programs by conducting or promoting the coordination and acceleration of research, investigations, experiments, training, demonstrations, surveys, and studies relating to the causes, effects, extent, prevention, reduction, and elimination of water pollution. Demonstrations must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration.
4. Projects must be broad in scope and encompass more than one state, tribe, or local government.
5. Funds cannot be used for activities to implement a wetlands program or for the purchase of land or conservation easements. Funds cannot be used for inventory or mapping for the sole purpose of locating wetlands. Funds cannot be used for implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs. If proposals are submitted that have these ineligible activities, proposals will not be considered for funding.
6. Proposals must be received by EPA or through Grants.gov on or before the submission closing date and time published in Section IV.D of this announcement; proposals received after the published closing date and time will be returned to the sender without further consideration.
7. Hard copy proposals must be submitted by hand delivery, express delivery service, or courier service. **Proposals submitted by any type of regular U.S. Postal Service mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.**

D. PERFORMANCE PARTNERSHIP GRANTS

Funds for a WPDG may be included in a PPG. A PPG enables entities to combine funds from more than one environmental program grant into a single grant with a single budget. Non-profit, non-governmental organizations are not eligible for PPGs. Under the WPDG program, interstate agency proposals must first be selected under the competitive grant process and, in accordance with 40 CFR 35.138, the workplan commitments that would have been included in the WPDG workplan must be included in the PPG workplan. Similarly, intertribal consortia proposals must first be selected under this competitive grant process and in accordance with 40 CFR 35.535. For further information, see the final rules on Environmental Program Grants for state, interstate, and local government agencies at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A and tribes at 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart B. The rules are also available on EPA's website at: <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA->

TOX/2001/January/Day-09/t218.htm (state) and at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/EPA-GENERAL/2001/January/Day-16/g219.htm> (tribal).

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

A. ADDRESS TO REQUEST APPLICATION PACKAGES

Grant application forms, including Standard Forms SF 424 and SF 424A, are available at http://www.epa.gov/ogd/grants/how_to_apply.htm and by mail upon request by calling the Grants Administration Division at (202) 564-5320.

B. FORM OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants have the option to submit their proposals in *one* of two ways: 1) electronically through the Grants.gov website **or** 2) via hard copy and compact disc (CD) by express delivery service, hand delivery, or courier service to the EPA contact identified in Section IV.B.2. **Proposals submitted by regular U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered.** EPA will not accept faxed submissions. All proposals must be prepared, and include the information, as described in Section IV.C below, regardless of mode of submission.

1. Grants.gov Submission

Applicants who wish to submit their materials electronically through the federal government's Grants.gov web site may do so. Grants.gov allows an applicant to download an application package template and complete the package offline based on agency instructions. After an applicant completes the required application package, it can submit the package electronically to Grants.gov, which transmits the package to the funding agency.

The electronic submission of your application must be made by an official representative of your institution who is registered with Grants.gov and is authorized to sign applications for Federal assistance. For more information, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on "Get Registered" on the left side of the page. *Note that the registration process may take a week or longer to complete.* If your organization is not currently registered with Grants.gov, please encourage your office to designate an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) and ask that individual to begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To begin the application process under this grant announcement, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Apply for Grants" tab on the left side of the page. Then click on "Apply Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions" to download the PureEdge viewer and obtain the application package for the announcement. To download the PureEdge viewer click on the "PureEdge Viewer" link. Once you have downloaded the viewer, you may retrieve the application package by entering the Funding Opportunity Number, **EPA-OW-OWOW-07-03**, or the CFDA number that applies to the announcement (CFDA 66.462), in the appropriate field. You may also be able to access the application package by clicking on the button "How To Apply" at the top right of the synopsis page for this announcement on <http://www.grants.gov> (to find the synopsis page, go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on the "Find Grant Opportunities" button on the left side of the page and then go to Search Opportunities and use the Browse by Agency feature to find EPA opportunities).

Application Submission Deadline

Your organization's AOR must submit your complete application electronically to EPA through Grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) no later than **11:59 P.M. Friday August 10, 2007.**

Please submit *all* of the application materials described below. To view the full funding announcement, go to www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/ or go to <http://www.grants.gov> and click on “Find Grant Opportunities” on the left side of the page and then click on Search Opportunities/Browse by Agency and select Environmental Protection Agency. Application materials submitted through Grants.gov will be time/date stamped.

How to submit your application through Grants.gov

Applicants are required to submit the following documents to apply electronically through Grants.gov. All documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.

- For the Proposal Narrative portion, you will need to attach electronic files. Prepare this as described in Section IV.C of the announcement and save the document to your computer as an MS Word or PDF file. When you are ready to attach it to the application package, click on “Project Narrative Attachment Form,” and open the form. Click “Add Mandatory Project Narrative File,” and then attach it (previously saved to your computer) using the browse window that appears. You may then click “View Mandatory Project Narrative File” to view it. Enter a brief descriptive title of your project in the space beside “Mandatory Project Narrative File Filename,” the filename should be no more than 40 characters long. If there are other attachments that you would like to submit to accompany your application (such as letters of support, annotated resumes, pictures and/or maps), you may click “add Optional Project Narrative File” and proceed as before. When you have finished attaching the necessary documents, click “Close Form.” When you return to the “Grant Application Package” page, select the “Project Narrative Attachment Form” and click “Move Form to Submission List.” The form should now appear in the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”
- The following 2 additional documents should appear in the “Mandatory Documents” box on the Grants.gov Grant Application Package page.
 1. SF 424 – Application for Federal Assistance
 2. SF 424A – Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
- For each document, click on the appropriate form and then click “Open Form” below the box. The fields that must be completed will be highlighted in yellow. Optional fields and completed fields will be displayed in white. If you enter an invalid response or incomplete information in a field, you will receive an error message. When you have finished filling out each form, click “Save.” When you return to the electronic Grant Application Package page, click on the form you just completed, and then click on the box that says, “Move Form to Submission List.” This action moves the document over to the box that says, “Mandatory Completed Documents for Submission.”

Once you have finished filling out all of the forms/attachments and they appear in one of the “Completed Documents for Submission” boxes, click the “Save” button that appears at the top of the Web page. It is suggested that you save the document a second time, using a different name, since this will make it easier to submit an amended package later if necessary.

Please use the following format when saving your file: “Applicant Name – FY07 –National Wetland Program Development Grants– 1st Submission.” If it becomes necessary to submit an amended package at a later date, then the name of the 2nd submission should be changed to “Applicant Name –FY07- National Wetland Program Development Grants – 2nd Submission.” Once your application package has been completed and saved, send it to your AOR for

submission to U.S. EPA through Grants.gov. Please advise your AOR to close all other software programs before attempting to submit the application package through Grants.gov.

From the “Grant Application Package” page, your AOR may submit the application package by clicking the “Submit” button that appears at the top of the page. The AOR will then be asked to verify the agency and funding opportunity number for which the application package is being submitted. If problems are encountered during the submission process, the AOR should reboot his/her computer before trying to submit the application package again. [It may be necessary to turn off the computer (not just restart it) before attempting to submit the package again.] If the AOR continues to experience submission problems, he/she may contact Grants.gov for assistance by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or email at <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp> or contact Myra Price at 1-202-566-1225 or email at price.myra@epa.gov. If you have any other technical difficulties while applying electronically, please refer to <http://www.grants.gov/help/help.jsp>.

If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (*not from Grants.gov*) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Myra Price as indicated in the paragraph above. Failure to do so may result in your proposal not being reviewed.

2. Hard Copy and Compact Disc (CD) Submission

Two hard copies of the complete proposal package described in Section IV.C below, and an electronic version on a CD, are required to be sent by express delivery service, courier service, or hand delivered. Please mark all submissions: ATTN: **FY07 WPDG Proposal**. The CD may be in Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) or Microsoft Word (.doc.) Letters of support, annotated resumes, pictures and/or maps will need to be scanned so that they can be submitted electronically as part of the CD. Pictures and/or maps may be included as separate files using .jpg or .tif format.

Proposals submitted by regular U.S. Postal Mail will not be considered. EPA will not accept faxed submissions.

The address for hard copy submission is:

Attn: Myra Price
US EPA, Office of Wetlands, Oceans, and Watersheds
EPA West Building, Room 7231P
1301 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20004

C. CONTENT OF APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applicants should read the following section very closely and address all requirements thoroughly. All proposal packages must include the following three documents described below:

1. Signed Standard Form (SF) 424, Application for Federal Assistance
2. SF 424A, Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs
3. A workplan that must be typewritten must include the information as described below. If a particular item is not applicable, clearly state this in the proposal.

NOTE: The workplan must be limited to no more than fifteen (15) typewritten 8.5x11-inch pages (a page is one side of paper). Pages should be consecutively numbered for ease of reading. It is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 1-inch margins. While these guidelines establish the minimum type size recommended, applicants are advised that readability is of paramount importance and should take precedence in selection of an appropriate font for use in the proposal. Additional pages beyond the 15 page limit will not be considered. The cover page and supporting materials (such as support letters, maps/pictures, and annotated resumes) will not be considered within the page limit.

Workplan

1. Cover Page including (Not counted in page limit):
 - a. Project Title;
 - b. Name of Applicant;
 - c. National Priority Area(s) from Section I.C addressed in the proposal or indicate “other” if a National Priority Area is not addressed;
 - d. Key personnel and contact information (*i.e.*, e-mail address and phone number);
 - e. Geographic Location (Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) level and name of the watershed, within which the project occurs if appropriate; and
 - f. Total project cost (specify the amount of funding requested from EPA and the required match contribution in dollars).
2. Abstract/project summary (recommended 75 words or less). Brief description of the project.
3. Project description containing:
 - a. Brief description of environmental issue(s) of concern (need for the project);
 - b. Project Goals and Objectives:
 - i. Stated Objective/Link to EPA Strategic Plan - List the Objective of the project and describe the linkage to the EPA Strategic Plan, Goal 4, Sub-objective 4.3 (see Section I.B of this announcement);
 - ii. Results of Activities (Outputs) - List the products/results which are expected to be achieved from accomplishment of the project and an approach for tracking your progress toward achieving the expected project output(s) (examples of outputs can be found in Section I.B of this announcement);
 - iii. Anticipated Environmental Improvement (Outcome) - List the anticipated environmental improvements to be accomplished as a result of the project activities. These improvements are changes or benefits to the environment which are a result from the accomplishment of workplan commitments and outputs. Describe an approach for tracking progress toward achieving the expected project outcome(s) (examples of outcomes can be found in Section I.B of this announcement);
 - iv. Established Baseline for Measurement - Describe what baseline will be used to determine whether the project

- resulted in environmental improvement (*i.e.*, current condition);
- c. Describe how the project will address one or more of the National Priority Areas identified in Section I.C of this announcement (if applicable). Describe how the project activities support and build on state/tribe/local government wetland programs. Describe how the project encompasses more than one state, tribe, or local government.
 - d. Project Tasks - Outline the steps you will take to meet the project goals. Include a description of the roles and responsibilities of the applicant(s) in carrying out the project.
 - e. Milestone Schedule – Provide a milestone schedule that covers each year of the total grant period request and provides a breakout of the project activities into phases with associated tasks and a timeframe for completion of tasks.
 - f. Provide a brief description of staffing and funding resources available to implement the proposed project including the number of workers and staff qualifications (annotated resumes are preferred but not necessary and are not included in the page limit).
 - g. Provide a brief description of the applicant’s organizational experience related to the proposed project, and the organization’s infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project.
 - h. Describe how and with whom the applicant intends to partner with and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with outreach activities (partnerships).
 - i. Provide a brief description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to state, tribal, and local governmental agencies and the public. Proposals should explain how information from a demonstration project or pilot will contribute to inform other projects or situations across a state or tribal nation.
 - j. Describe how the project will address:
 - i. Quality Assurance / Quality Control (QA/QC) issues if the applicant expects to collect data and information (see Section VIII).
 - ii. The measures the applicant will put in place to control, prevent, and/or avoid the spread of invasive species (see Section VIII).
4. Budget Narrative – Provide a detailed budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. This section provides an opportunity for narrative description of the budget or aspects of the budget found in the SF 424A such as “other” and “contractual”. Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. Identify the required match in the budget and describe cost-effectiveness, reasonableness of costs, and value of in-kind contributions. Include any travel for applicant staff to attend wetland meetings throughout the proposed project period. While contractual and subgrant efforts may be part of an applicant’s proposal, each WPDG recipient must be significantly involved in the administration of the award. EPA recommends that recipients use no more than 50% of the grant funds to contract or subgrant to any other entity. However, if the applicant wants to exceed this limit, the applicant may submit a written justification for this an

attachment to the proposal. EPA will evaluate the need for greater contractual or subgrant participation and may approve the request if there is adequate justification to exceed the 50% limit. Note that any proposed subgrants should be included in the “other” cost category of the SF 424A.

5. Past Performance - Briefly describe other federally- and/or non-federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than three such projects and preferably EPA projects).
 - a. Describe whether, and how, you were able to successfully complete and manage those agreements.
 - b. Describe your history of meeting the reporting requirements under those agreements including submitting acceptable final technical reports.
 - c. Environmental Results Past Performance - Briefly describe the federally- or non-federally funded assistance agreements that your organization performed within the last three years (no more than three such projects and preferably EPA projects) and describe how you documented and/or reported on whether you were making progress towards achieving the expected results (*i.e.*, outputs and outcomes) under those agreements. If you were not making progress, please indicate whether, and how, you documented why not.

Note: For items a, b, and c above, if the applicant has prior EPA assistance agreement experience the proposal should discuss the prior EPA grants first; if you do not have prior EPA assistance agreement experience then you should submit information on projects funded by other federal agencies; if you have not previously received federal funds, you may provide a history of applicable past performance with private funding, or funding awarded by state, tribal, or local governments, and applicants who have not managed projects with outside financing may provide information regarding relevant projects funded in-house. Applicants should identify the agreements and a point of contact for each such agreement. If you do not have any relevant or available environmental results past performance information, please indicate this in the proposal and you will receive a neutral score for this factor under Section V.

6. Any support letters should specifically indicate how the supporting organization will assist the project. (Not counted in page limit).
7. Any pictures and/or maps. (Not counted in page limit).

NOTE: The applicant should also provide in its workplan any additional information, to the extent not already identified above that addresses the selection criteria found in Section V.

D. SUBMISSION DATES AND TIMES

Proposal submissions sent by hard copy with CD must be **received** by the Agency Contact identified in Section VII by **4:30 P.M. EDT Friday August 10, 2007**. Proposals submitted

electronically through Grants.gov must be submitted by **11:59 P.M. EDT Friday August 10, 2007**. Late proposals will not be considered for funding.

E. CONFIDENTIAL BUSINESS INFORMATION

In accordance with 40 CFR 2.203, applicants may claim all or a portion of their application/proposal as confidential business information. EPA will evaluate confidentiality claims in accordance with 40 CFR Part 2. Applicants must clearly mark proposals or portions of proposals they claim as confidential. If no claim of confidentiality is made, EPA is not required to make the inquiry to the applicant otherwise required by 40 CFR 2.204(c)(2) prior to disclosure.

V. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

A. SELECTION CRITERIA

All eligible proposals, based on the Section III threshold eligibility review, will be evaluated based on the evaluation criteria and weights below (100 point scale). Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly each criterion and/or sub-criterion is addressed in the proposal package.

1) National Priority Area (20 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposed project addresses one or more of the National Priority Areas (<i>i.e.</i> , Regulation, Monitoring and Assessment, Wetlands Restoration, and/or Water Quality Standards) identified in Section I.C of this announcement. <i>Points will be awarded based on how well and thoroughly one or more of the National Priority Area(s) are addressed in the workplan. (20 points)</i>
2) Environmental Results (30 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on each of these sub-criterion: A. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates potential environmental results (<i>i.e.</i> , will the project result in the protection of wetland resources), anticipated outputs and outcomes, and how the outcomes are linked to EPA's Strategic Plan. (15 points) B. Extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates a sound plan for tracking progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes (examples of outputs and outcomes can be found in Section I.B of this announcement). (15 points)
3) Specific Workplan Elements (20 points)	Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which the proposal demonstrates the following: A. A milestone schedule of activities for the project. (4 points) B. The reasonableness and cost-effectiveness of all costs in the budget and estimated funding amounts for each workplan component/task. Total costs must include both federal and matching (non-federal) components. (4 points) C. That the project supports and builds on state/tribal/local government wetland programs. (4 points) D. A description of roles and responsibilities of the applicant(s) in carrying out the project. (4 points) E. A description of how the applicant will transfer the results and/or methods to state, tribe, and local governmental agencies and the public. (4 points)

4) Project Partnerships) (5 points)	Under this criterion, applicants will be evaluated based on the extent and quality to which they demonstrate: how and with whom the applicant intends to partner with and/or encourage favorable attention to the project with outreach activities. (5 points)
5) Programmatic Capability/Technical Experience/Qualifications (10 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion: A. Organizational experience related to the proposed project and infrastructure as it relates to its ability to successfully implement the proposed project. (5 points) B. Staff experience/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources, or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the goals of the project. (5 points)
6) Past Performance (15 points)	Under this criterion, proposals will be evaluated based on the applicant's ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the following sub-criterion: A. Past performance in successfully completing federally or non-federally funded projects similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years (4 points) B. History of meeting reporting requirements under federally or non-federally funded assistance agreements similar in size, scope, and relevance to the proposed project performed within the last three years and submitting acceptable final technical reports under these agreements. (3 points) C. Extent and quality to which the applicant documented and/or reported on their progress towards achieving the expected results (<i>e.g.</i> , outcomes and outputs) under federal assistance agreements performed within the last three years, and if such progress was not being made, whether the applicant adequately documented and/or reported why not. (8 points) Note: In evaluating applicants the Agency will consider the information supplied by the applicant in its proposal, and may also consider relevant information from other sources including Agency files (<i>e.g.</i> , Grantee Compliance Database) and prior/current grantors (<i>e.g.</i> , to verify and/or supplement the information provided the by applicant). Applicants who have no relevant or available past performance information will receive a neutral score for these factors (for item A above 2 points, for item B above 1.5 points, and for item C above 4 points).

B. REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

All proposals received by EPA or submitted electronically through Grants.gov by the submission deadline will first be screened by EPA staff against the threshold criteria in Section III of the announcement. Proposals that do not pass the threshold review will not be evaluated further or considered for funding.

A panel of EPA staff will review eligible proposals based on the evaluation criteria listed in Section V.A and will develop a list of the most highly rated proposals to submit to the Selection

Official. Final funding decisions will then be made by the Selection Official based on the review panel evaluations and may also take into account the following additional factors:

1. Geographic distribution of funds;
2. Diversity of projects (this includes type of project and type of applicant); and
3. Availability of funds.

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

A. AWARD NOTICES

All applicants, including those who are not selected for funding, will be notified by e-mail. Successful applicant(s) will be invited to submit a complete application package prior to award (see 40 CFR 30.12). Required forms and instructions for preparing and submitting the completed application will be provided at that time.

EPA reserves the right to negotiate and/or adjust the final grant amount and workplan prior to award, as appropriate and consistent with Agency policy including the Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, EPA Order 5700.5A1. An approvable final workplan narrative is required to include:

1. Workplan components to be funded under the assistance agreement;
2. Estimated work years and the estimated funding amounts for each workplan component;
3. Workplan commitments for each workplan component and a timeframe for their accomplishment;
4. Performance evaluation process and reporting schedule in accordance with §35.115 of 40 CFR; and
5. Roles and responsibilities of the recipient and EPA (for cooperative agreements only) in carrying out the workplan commitments.

In addition, successful applicants will be required to certify that they have not been Debarred or Suspended from participation in federal assistance awards in accordance with 40 CFR Part 32.

A listing of successful proposals will be posted at the following website address <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>. This website may also contain information about this announcement including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications (www.grants.gov will also contain information on any modifications to the announcement).

B. ADMINISTRATIVE AND NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

The general award and administration process for all WPDGs is governed by regulations at 40 CFR Part 30 (Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (“Environmental Program Grants for State, Interstate, and Local Government Agencies”) and Subpart B (“Environmental Program Grants for Tribes”). These regulations can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/epacfr40/chapt-I.info/chi-toc.htm>.

C. DUNS NUMBER

Applicants are required to provide a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number with the full application for Federal grants or cooperative agreements. Organizations can receive a DUNS number in one day, at no cost, by calling the dedicated toll-free DUNS Number request line at 1-866-705-5711 or by visiting the web site at www.dnb.com.

D. DISPUTE PROCEDURES

Assistance agreement competition-related disputes will be resolved in accordance with the dispute resolution procedures published in 70 FR (Federal Register) 3629, 3630 (January 26, 2005) which can be found at:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-1371.htm>. Copies may also be requested by contacting the Agency contact in Section VII.

E. FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

- This competitive grant program cannot fund payment of taxes for landowners who have a wetland on their property.
- Purchase of vehicles (including boats, motor homes) and office furniture is not eligible for funding under this program.
- Lease of a vehicle(s) may be permitted, but is contingent on justification of need in the workplan.
- Proposed project activities must comply with all state and federal regulations applicable to the project area. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.

F. COPYRIGHTS

EPA reserves a royalty-free, nonexclusive, and irrevocable license to reproduce, publish or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, for federal government purposes in accordance with 40 CFR 31.34: (a) the copyright in any work developed under a grant, subgrant, or contract under a grant or subgrant; and (b) any rights of copyright to which a grantee, subgrantee or a contractor purchases ownership with grant support.

G. REPORTING

WPDGs are covered under the following EPA grant regulations: 40 CFR Part 30 (Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations), and 40 CFR Part 35, Subpart A (States, Interstate agencies and Local Governments) and Subpart B (Tribes and Intertribal consortia). These regulations specify basic grant reporting requirements; including performance and financial reports (see 40 CFR 30.51, 30.52, 35.115, and 35.515). In negotiating these grants, EPA will work closely with recipients to incorporate appropriate performance measures and reporting requirements into each grant agreement consistent with 40 CFR 30.51, 35.115, and 35.515. These regulations provide some flexibility in determining the appropriate content and frequency of performance reports. At a minimum, however, the reporting schedule must require the recipient to report at least annually.

VII. AGENCY CONTACTS

Note to Applicants: EPA will respond to questions from individual applicants regarding threshold eligibility criteria, administrative issues related to the submission of the proposal, and requests for clarification about the announcement. Questions must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified below by **Monday August 6, 2007** and written responses will be posted on EPA Wetland Division's website at <http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/grantguidelines/>. In accordance with EPA's Competition Policy (EPA Order 5700.5A1), EPA staff will not meet with individual applicants or discuss draft proposals, provide informal comments on draft proposals, or provide advice to applicants on how to respond to ranking criteria. Applicants are responsible for the contents of their proposals.

Agency Contact

Myra Price

Phone Number: (202) 566-1225

E-mail: Price.Myra@epa.gov

VIII. OTHER INFORMATION**A. QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL (QA/QC) and STORET**

Quality Assurance/Quality Control requirements are applicable to these grants (see 40 CFR 30.54 and 40 CFR 31.45). QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data.

Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. Environmental data include information collected directly from measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature. Applicants should allow sufficient time and resources for this process. EPA can assist applicants in determining whether QA/QC is required for the proposed project. If QA/QC is required for the project, the applicant is encouraged to work with the EPA QA/QC staff to determine the appropriate QA/QC practices for the project. Contact the Wetland Grant Coordinator (See Section VII for Agency Contact information) for referral to an EPA QA/QC staff person.

Additionally, recipients of grants for wetland monitoring projects will be encouraged to submit all data from monitoring activities to STORET (short for STOrage and RETrieval) database.

STORET provides an accessible, nationwide central repository of water information of known quality. Grantee submission of monitoring data into STORET or monitoring data made available in the Advisory Council for Water Information (ACWI) Core Monitoring Data Element Standard (or Data Exchange Template) will facilitate exchange of monitoring data between EPA and its partners. Information on STORET is at <http://www.epa.gov/storet> and information on the standard is at <http://www.epa.gov/edr>.

B. DATA SHARING

All recipients of these assistance agreements will be required to share any data generated through this funding agreement as a defined deliverable in the final workplan.

C. INVASIVE SPECIES CONTROL

Pursuant to Executive Order 13112 (<http://www.invasivespeciesinfo.gov/>), the recipient of EPA funds and all subcontractors shall monitor the project to insure it does not facilitate the introduction or spread of invasive species. If invasive species are detected or populations promoted in any way, the recipient will respond rapidly to control populations in an environmentally sound manner, as approved by the EPA Project Officer.